

Logistics Modernization: Lethality and Effectiveness

Logistics modernization is about substantially improving Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) lethality and effectiveness. Period.

by LtGen Richard L. Kelly

It is not about saving money or people; it is not about efficiency at the expense of effectiveness; it is not “just in time” logistics. We are continuing to shape our modernization initiatives, but we are maintaining a laser focus at the tactical level while using the rich body of lessons learned and relearned—primarily from Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I. We continue to tap into those who do logistics best—whether they be government, the Armed Services, or the private sector. Simply put, logistics modernization is the most comprehensive approach ever taken to improve tactical and operational logistics.

In my article last year, “Logistics Modernization: A Marine Corps Warfighting Imperative” (*MCG*, Aug 04), I ended with a comment about dealing with “white water” as we navigate through the first few years of logistics modernization: technology insertion, processes reengineering, and organizational/training/doctrine reform. We have pushed our kayaks off the riverbank, and we are now picking up speed.

articles that follow portray not just the way ahead but also what has been delivered to date.

People, Processes, and Technology

The centerpiece of logistics modernization remains our focus on people. We are ensuring that Marine logisticians and the units they serve are linked to the units they support. Establishing enduring relationships between the supported and supporting unit is important to our successes on the battlefield. All of the information technology (IT) in the world is meaningless if we do not first establish and maintain the supported and supporting relationships in our MAGTFs.

You can observe the enormous amount of change necessary to meet these demands in our Operating Forces. As force service support groups (FSSGs) have prepared to deploy to Iraq, a significant amount of time and energy has gone into reconfiguring FSSGs that have—for 30 years—been organized for garrison efficiency. We’re realigning them into warfighting organizations that

cadre staffs in some cases—gives us the momentum to define and refine our support processes within the MAGTF. We will significantly reduce the friction associated with moving from garrison to tactical environments by keeping these warfighting organizations alive. We have much to do, but we are moving forward.

In building tomorrow’s battlefield capabilities, our second initiative is the modernization of the technologies supporting our people. Here we have chosen our IT enabler to be the Global Combat Support System-Marine Corps (GCSS-MC). GCSS-MC will allow us to fundamentally change the way we do the business of logistics. We will soon be operating in a near-realtime, web-based environment that will arm logisticians with the information they need to make timely and accurate decisions no matter the level or tempo of war.

GCSS-MC will reduce Marine Corps response times for goods and services to a level equal to or better than what we experience every day in our personal lives. We will operate in a collaborative, shared data environment knowing with greater accuracy where things are in the logistics chain and the status of orders. We will be able to assert logistics command and control (Log C²) on the logistics chain that supports our MAGTFs across all three levels of war. Our logistics Marines and sailors will be equipped with the best tools available and will have the shackles of legacy systems and processes removed forever.

GCSS-MC will reduce our training time, will be functionally intuitive, and will be very similar to buying books on Amazon.com, building a

We will operate in a collaborative, shared data environment knowing with greater accuracy where things are in the logistics chain and the status of orders.

We will soon be in intermittent turbulence as we modernize end-to-end, tactical-to-strategic Marine Corps logistics. But we are well-prepared for the existing journey that will make Marine Corps logistics great and our combat capability more lethal. There’s no turning back. This article and the excellent

can provide cross-functional logistics support throughout the battlespace while at the same time maintaining garrison logistics support capability. This is a balancing act, and today we are out of balance.

As we move forward, maintaining our combat support organization while in garrison—even if only using

personal computer on Dell.com, or buying clothes on LandsEnd.com. GCSS-MC will be born joint and interoperable and will give us tremendous capability from the tactical level back. It is adequately funded and clearly my highest priority.

Our third and equally important modernization initiative is streamlin-

ing critical processes in the MAGTF that involve our people and our technology. Marines involved in this enhancement effort are invigorated by the challenge. Our three logistics modernization teams (formerly Field Supply and Maintenance Analysis Offices) have become our field change agents for logistics modernization in general and GCSS-MC in particular.

At present our logistics modernization teams—east, west, and Western Pacific—are supporting I, II, and III Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) with Marines who have recently reengineered their mission, vision, and goals. By transforming from a “compliance-based” focus to a “process-based” strategy they have been trained to map, measure, and facilitate the changes that will be necessary. They are the vanguards for logistics modernization while also supporting our regionalization of bases and stations—the fifth element of the MAGTF.

Just last month we completed formation of the “iron triangle” as some are calling it. This three-way partnership between the U.S. Marine Corps, Oracle Corporation (our e-business partner), and Accenture LLC (our systems integrator partner) will be led by our squad-sized subject matter expert team. They will assist our GCSS-MC program manager, Oracle, and Accenture in the design, configuration, testing, and transition to initial and full operational capability in 2007.

This first edition (Block I) of GCSS-MC will include the basic “blocking and tackling” of supply, maintenance, and distribution and will retire some of our major legacy systems. Future editions are planned as Block II requirements. These are being developed and refined today and will include Log C², active and passive radio frequency identification, and other capabilities. Here you will find that both II MEF and I have stepped up the developmental cycle significantly by developing a MAGTF distribution center that supports the entire MAGTF with better visibility of sustainment stocks in the pipeline to forces in Iraq.

They have also developed and employed a tactical distribution system that gives visibility for these stocks all

the way down to the supported unit level. These initiatives by two MAGTFs are no longer Microsoft PowerPoint presentations. They are active processes, at work today in Iraq, using today’s technology. They are significantly improving our ability to define the requirements we want GCSS-MC to meet at the operational and tactical levels of war.

Controlling this modernization battlefield has become by far our most important and challenging task. The critical work of advancing mod-

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ernization’s many facets is being done by our squad-sized Logistics Modernization Transition Task Force (TTF). Their first task was to establish a lasting and professional relationship with the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC). Our TTF continues working in a close partnership at MCCDC within their Expeditionary Force Development Center (EFDC). They are weaving the logistics operational architecture and modernization initiatives relating to Log C², maintenance, supply, distribution, and combat service support (CSS) organization through the doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) process.

Using the EFDC’s process for combat capability development, I approved our comprehensive logistics modernization Solution Initiating Directive in early June. This directive resulted in the Deputy Commandant, Combat Development (DC CD) publishing the logistics modernization Solution Planning Directive (SPD). The SPD outlines logistics modernization taskings across the DOTMLPF pillars and communicates detailed actions.

Ensuring Integration for 2015

Lastly, we must keep the MAGTF’s future in focus. Here we are embarking on a partnership with the Naval Logistics Integration (NLI) Initiative. Formed 2 years ago, NLI is shaping the way to seabasing in 2015 while

also delivering new capabilities today. The increasing interdependence of the Navy and Marine Corps naval and joint warfighting environments and the need to transform naval logistics under the seabasing construct requires Navy/Marine Corps logistics integration. Emerging operational concepts, technologies, processes, and organizations transform the capability of our Navy-Marine Team to conduct distributed, multidimensional joint, allied, and coalition warfare in the 21st century.

Our resulting naval capabilities must produce and exploit a dispersed battlespace within which sovereign and sustainable naval, air, ground, and space elements form a unified force that projects offensive power and defensive capability. Naval forces will provide unique and complementary warfighting capabilities from the sea to joint force commanders to enhance deterrence; secure swift, decisive military victory; and strengthen the peace.

It is with this backdrop of multidimensional joint warfare that the Navy and Marine Corps smartly integrate naval logistics. Tasks and schedules are jointly approved and modified by the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Fleet Readiness and Logistics (N4)) and DC, Installations and Logistics (DC I&L). Approved recommendations are translated into guidance and action by the Services within their existing organizations. Specific areas of mutual action include:

- Logistics systems, enterprise resource planning (ERP), and inventory management.
- Logistic policies, procedures, and doctrine.
- Common logistics support organizations.
- Training and education.
- Naval distribution.

We are already finding that NLI is delivering results to the Marine Corps’ Operating Forces. This is done by placing common and Ma-

MCCDC—A Full Partner in Transformation

"A Deputy Commandant with a vision on how Marine Corps logistics should best support the MAGTF and our warfighters, LtGen Kelly and his team have clearly articulated a sound vision of logistics modernization throughout the Marine Corps. This is a cross-organizational transformation of our logistics, and it's a heartening success story in the making.

"LtGen Kelly and I&L have set in motion an ambitious plan to enhance logistics support to the warfighter. He assembled the logistics community's best and brightest minds to form a TTF, and he has integrated with MCCDC's combat developers to create an executable plan—an ef-

fort that will radically improve our tactical and operational logistics.

"Logistics modernization will take a lot of work, but it will pay off for our Corps. This critical transformation will enable us to strike deeper and operate at a faster tempo with more sustainable precision against our enemies. MCCDC will be a full partner in facilitating this transformation as rapidly as possible—a transformation that will make us even more effective against our Nation's enemies."

—LtGen James N. Mattis,
DC CD

rine-unique repair parts aboard Navy resupply ships servicing our Marine expeditionary units and by using the Navy's advance traceability and control system to rapidly ship unserviceable secondary reparables (for example, engines, transmissions, and circuit board assemblies) to a depot-level facility for repair and return to the supply system.

In addition to NLI, we have found that ground and aviation logistics communities have started separate modernization efforts. The advocate for aviation (DC, Aviation) directed his staff to undertake the Marine Aviation Logistics Support Program II (MALSP II). Consequently, we have initiated action between logistics modernization and MALSP II referred to as the MAGTF Logistics Initiative. Without this initiative we will not achieve the seamless integration of the logistics battlespace function into our future operating concepts—particularly seabasing in 2015. (See "Redefining MAGTF Logistics" on p. 31.)

We are seeking common logistics processes, an integrated MAGTF logistics IT solution that supports the warfighter, and a broad-based MAGTF logistics training and education plan. Ultimately, integration of MAGTF logistics is a precondition to NLI and the surest path to improving the combat effectiveness of the Marine Corps and Navy. Similar to NLI, our MAGTF logistics integration group between DC I&L and DC Aviation is a standing forum to act on MAGTF logistics issues. Areas of mutual action being addressed include:

- Logistics chain processes and gap/fit analysis between aviation and ground logistics.
- Logistics chain technology enablers.
- GCSS-MC and Navy ERP visioning.
- Ground/aviation Log C² (logistics common operational picture enabler).
- Realignment of CSS/aviation logistics forums to achieve "MAGTF logistics" flavor.

Much More Than Just Plans—We're Moving Ahead

As I report on the progress of logistics modernization, I hope you understand that while we are still planning in some areas, we have crossed the line of departure in the critical areas of people, processes, and technology. We are moving beyond conceptualization and into limited applications across the board. We have teams in place at all levels, and they share my laser focus on in-

creasing the MAGTF's lethality through excellence in logistics.


Throughout this year and during 2006 you are going to hear more about our efforts than you did last year. I encourage each Marine to learn more about logistics modernization by contacting his local logistics modernization team and asking for a professional military education seminar. Ask them the hard questions. You can also visit our web site at <<https://logmod.hqmc.usmc.mil>>. I ask every Marine to join us in shaping and implementing the most important enterprise-wide warfighting support initiative in 30 years.

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>LtGen Kelly is the DC I&L.

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